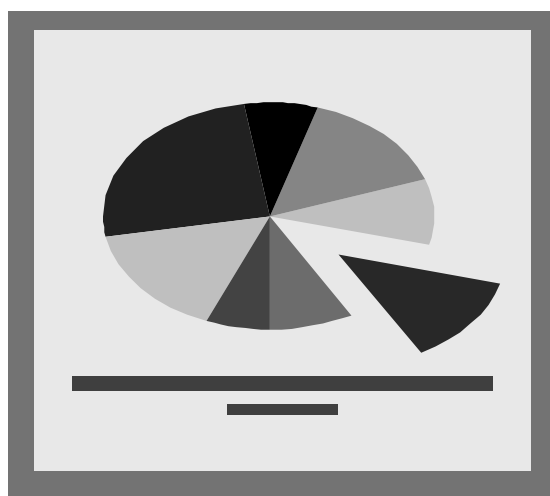


RESULTS FROM MENTORING EFFECTIVENESS RESEARCH



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Results from Mentoring Effectiveness Research

Mentoring has been shown through research and evaluation studies to be an effective approach to reducing the complex problems that face our youth today, such as alcohol and drug use, academic failure, teenage pregnancy, and gang violence.

Mentoring has broad appeal as a prevention strategy because of its strong link with the core of resiliency efforts. Resiliency research examines the fact that youth in potentially harmful and destructive environments can emerge as positive and productive adults due to various factors that serve to negate or reverse the impact youth in risky situations.¹ In the case of mentoring, the resilient factor present is primarily the development and sustenance of a caring relationship between an adult and young person.²

So how do we know that mentoring works? Consider the following results from mentoring programs and evaluation studies:

Academic Failure

Mentoring programs can help keep kids in school and improve their academic performance.

- A study of a youth development program with a strong mentoring component -- the Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP) revealed that QOP members were more likely to be high school graduates (63% of members vs. 42% of control group) and were less likely to drop out of school (23% drop out vs. 50% of control group).³
- The Commonwealth Fund's survey of 360 young African-American males showed a correlation between participation in mentoring and counseling programs and the completion of school. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of young men who remained in school participated in mentoring or counseling programs, as compared to the 18% of young men who dropped out of school.⁴
- Children involved in the Big Brother/Big Sisters program experienced a 52% reduction in school absenteeism as well as an improvement in school performance. These results were greatest among Little Sisters. Participants also felt better about their school work and higher GPAs than their counterparts who did not participate.⁵
- Middle school students involved in an intergenerational mentoring program had positive outcomes including increased attendance at school.⁶
- A 1988 study on mentoring programs in Cincinnati schools showed that young people with mentors were more likely to stay in school, attend classes, achieve and aspire to better grades, and go to college.⁷

- The Cincinnati Youth Collaborative reports that after one year of mentoring activities, 73% of the youth involved in the program have improved academically, and 75% have improved socially.⁸

Alcohol and Drug Use

Youth involved with mentoring activities delay use or decrease involvement with alcohol and other drugs. Delaying alcohol and drug use decreases the likelihood that youth will engage in criminal activity or have problems in school.⁹

- Little Brothers and Little Sisters (LB/LS) were 46% less likely to start using illegal drugs than their study counterparts. Impact was largest among minority LB/LS, of whom 70% were less likely to initiate illegal drugs.¹⁰
- LB/LS were 27% less likely than their counterparts to start drinking alcohol. The greatest impact was for minority Little Sisters, who were less than half as likely to initiate alcohol use than their counterparts.¹¹
- Findings from a first-year evaluation of Positive Alternatives for Youth (PAY), a program involving mentoring relationships between adults and at-risk youth, showed that the children involved in PAY significantly reduced their intake of hard liquor as compared to a control group.¹²
- Findings from a study of young African-American males reveal a strong correlation between academic failure and alcohol and drug use. The majority (about 72%) of those who dropped out of school reported having used marijuana and alcohol, and 23% reported use of crack, cocaine, heroine, speed or downers. This is compared to those who remained in school, of whom about 50% reporting use of marijuana and alcohol, and 3% reporting use of crack, cocaine, heroine, speed, or downers.¹³
- Substance abuse is cited as one of the problem factors existing among chronic juvenile offenders in a study of Orange County juvenile recidivism.¹⁴

Teenage Pregnancy

Expanding and enhancing mentoring programs can help reduce teenage pregnancy.

- Involvement with the Quantum Opportunities Program resulted in reduced childbearing for participants as compared to a control group.¹⁵
- A study of a school-based program with a strong mentoring component (the Best Friends program) found that the pregnancy rate among participants was 1.1% as compared to 26% of their peers. Also only 14% of participants had experienced sexual intercourse as compared to 73% of their peers.¹⁶

- A Colorado Big Sisters program providing a decision making and pregnancy program for Hispanic girls has had no pregnancies or problems with alcohol and drugs since involvement with the program.¹⁷

Involvement with Gangs and Other Violence

Youth who are mentored have fewer problems with gang violence and less recidivism.

- A study of delinquent youth involved with the Partners, Inc. mentoring program in Colorado showed a 65-75% decrease in recidivism.¹⁸
- In a study of over 500 youthful offenders engaged in mentoring programs, 80% completed their probationary term without repeat offenses.¹⁹
- Juvenile offenders in a Michigan mentoring program also showed reduced rates of recidivism.²⁰
- The RESCUE Youth program in Los Angeles matches at-risk youth with volunteer firefighters with the goal of addressing truancy, juvenile delinquency, and other criminal behaviors. This program has worked with over 140 youth in communication and conflict resolution skills while providing training in fire prevention and first aid.²¹
- There is a strong correlation between academic failure and juvenile crime. A study of 360 young African American men in four cities found that 49% of those who had dropped out of school had been arrested or charged as juvenile offenders, as compared to 22% of the group who remained in school.²²

Endnotes

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